

I AM Navy Medicine

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My name is Erick Brendon: I am Navy Medicine

Filed under CORPSMAN, FLEET AND THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, FORCE HEALTH AND SAFETY

(NO COMMENTS)

By Erick Brendon

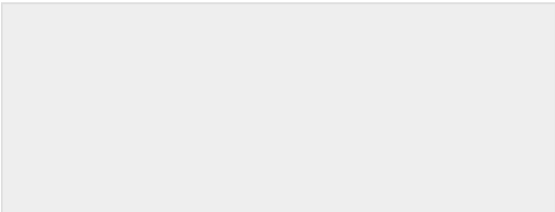


Being nearsighted, and slightly color blind, I decided that ophthalmology would be my specialty of choice.

I'm from Simi Valley, California. I graduated from Simi High School in 1994, and joined the Navy shortly after.

After boot camp I went to Hospital Corps School, interested in becoming an x-ray technician. I wanted to apply for "C" school, but was convinced by my enlisted leaders to see all of medicine before making a decision.

After graduating from Naval School of Health Sciences, I was stationed at Naval Medical Center San Diego in the spring of 1995 and placed in Neurology/Neurosurgery clinic. I eventually went up to the operating room to view a craniotomy and fell in love. I had to become involved with surgery! I thought becoming a surgical technician would be wonderful. I talked to a few friends about specializing in surgery. I was interested in the clinical and surgical aspect of patient care so this was my best option.





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I graduated summer 2008 as an ocular technician.

Being nearsighted, and slightly color blind, I decided that ophthalmology would be my specialty of choice. I applied for both surgical technologist 8483 and ocular technologist 8445 and was able to get picked for both schools. I graduated summer 2008 as an ocular technician. I graduated school with honors and distinction and had the choice of where I wanted to go. My parents had moved up to Portland, Oregon in 1996, and I had visited when I had breaks and I loved it. I naturally picked Bremerton ,Washington as my next home with the Navy. I was stationed there from 1998-2001 as the leading petty officer of the clinic. I love being an ocular technician, being involved in clinical and surgical care.

In ophthalmology we deal with diseases and disorders of the eye. It is so rewarding to be able to help active duty members, retirees and their loved ones when it comes to eye care. A patient might come to the clinic on an annual basis or semiannual basis if they have glaucoma, diabetes, even dry eye and cataracts. I enjoy helping when it gets to a point where we have to intervene surgically to help a patient regain their health. Patients are very happy for our service of improving their vision.



In ophthalmology we deal with diseases and disorders of the eye.

Right before I got out of the Navy in August 2001, I had helped start up the process of a refractive surgery clinic, where we would do LASIK and PRK to try to eliminate or reduce the use of glasses for active duty. When I left the Navy I managed a retina center as lead technician in Tacoma. It was amazing that I was placed in a lead position with my three years of being a Navy ocular technician with a wide range of experience. I was placed in charge of civilian technicians that had been doing the job for 14 years, but they just didn't have that same clinical and surgical experience.

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I had the good fortune of my former department head calling me, late summer 2002, and through proper channels I was hired back at Naval Hospital Bremerton as a contractor. I sure did miss the fast paced life as a technician. Now my main job was to do pre and post operative examinations on active duty members and assist with determining if they are a candidate for refractive surgery.



I had the good fortune of my former department head calling me, late summer 2002, and through proper channels I was hired back at Naval Hospital Bremerton.

I was sent for more specialty training above and beyond what I already had as a veteran helping active duty personnel do their jobs without the need for glasses. Wearing glasses in the field, whether as an aviator or submariner or in the diving community and especially special forces can be a hassle and even very dangerous. I took different courses and through on the job training was certified to operate the actual eye lasers that did the procedures. I would go up to the main operating room every once in awhile to teach the active duty service members different techniques to be more efficient during surgery.



Being certified and having a surgical background opens many doors for higher paying jobs when an active duty service member gets out of the Navy.

A few years went by and I gained more experience. The refractive surgery clinic is made up entirely of civilians, due to the extensive training it takes to efficiently run the equipment. The active duty would come and go and they would come from centers that didn't have refractive laser equipment.

I am also the lead surgical and clinical technician and share the job as clinical manager with my Nurse, Soledad Ugalino. Together we help our physicians run things smoothly and efficiently in the clinic and the operating room. Active duty surgical technicians can be part of our clinic and after a year can take a test in the civilian community to be certified technician.

Being certified and having a surgical background opens many doors for higher paying jobs when an active duty service member

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gets out of the Navy. It sure did for me, 16 years and going strong, I love my job!

My name is Erick Brendon and I am Navy Medicine.

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